



HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

It might surprise you to learn that most preventable injuries happen where you'd think you're safest – at home! In fact, the National Safety Council estimates that 15 million people were injured at home in 2003, and 54,000 died from their injuries. The leading cause of injuries and deaths came from; poisonings, falls, choking, drowning and fires/flames. Simple steps such as installing railings and smoke alarms and childproofing your home can lower the risk of injuries significantly.

Home safety involves the entire house. Here is a basic room-by-room checklist. How safe is your home?

KITCHEN

- ☐ Do you have good, even lighting around the stove, sink, and counters, especially where food is chopped by hand?
- ☐ Are knives and sharp utensils stored safely? Do you have proper utensils for opening cans, jars and bottles?
- ☐ Do you have a sturdy step stool for reaching high shelves and cupboards? (Chairs should not be used for climbing.)
- ☐ Are every day items within easy reach and heavy items in lower cabinets?
- ☐ Do you wipe up any spills especially on floors, promptly?
- ☐ Do you place food and utensils within safe reach when cooking, not on the far side of the burner?
- ☐ Do you keep pot handles turned toward the back of the stove?
- ☐ Are fabrics such as towels, potholders, and loose clothing away from the stove top?
- ☐ Do you keep grease containers and cooking oils away from the stove?
- ☐ Do you know how to contain grease fires? (Smother flames with a larger pan or lid and turn off the burner; do not try to pick up the pan, and never use water.)
- ☐ Is there a working fire extinguisher nearby, and do you know how to use it? (If a fire gets out of control, leave the house immediately and call the fire department.)
- ☐ Do you have a working smoke detector nearby, which is checked monthly? Are the batteries replaced every year?
- ☐ Are electric or gas ranges properly installed and vented? Do burner flames on gas ranges burn blue (not yellow-orange)?
- ☐ Do you disconnect electric appliances (toasters, mixers, etc.) immediately after use?
- ☐ If you have young children or grandchildren around, are household cleaners, insecticides, and poisons stored away from food and out of children's reach? Are food extracts such as vanilla and almond also stored away from children?

BATHROOMS

- ☐ Do you have non-skid rubber mats or abrasive strips in tubs and showers to prevent slips?
- ☐ If you have elderly people at home, have you fastened grab bars on the walls next to tubs and showers and are they used?
- ☐ Are night-lights installed and working properly?
- ☐ Are all outdated medicines disposed of properly, and current medicines marked clearly?
- ☐ Do you clean up all water and spills immediately, and keep walking areas clear of clutter?
- ☐ If you have children around, are all cleaning products, cosmetics, and medicines out of their reach?

STAIRWAYS

- ☐ Are stairs well lighted, with switches at both the top and bottom?
- ☐ Do you have sturdy handrails in each stairwell?
- ☐ Are treads, carpeting, and risers in good repair?
- ☐ Are stairways clean of clutter? (Even storing items temporarily on stairs could cause falls.)
- ☐ Are you sure to NEVER carry things up or down stairs, which put you off balance or block your vision?

BEDROOMS

- ☐ Are closet doors and dresser drawers closed when not in use?
- ☐ Are walking paths kept clear of furniture and clutter?
- ☐ Do you have flashlights handy for emergencies?
- ☐ Do you have working night-lights and easily accessible light switches?
- ☐ Do all second story bedrooms or higher have fire escape ladders?
- ☐ Have you prepared and practiced a fire escape plan, with two exits from every room?
- ☐ Does your home have working smoke detectors in or near each room that are checked monthly? Are the batteries replaced annually?
- ☐ Do you have a quality carbon monoxide detector on each level of your home near bedrooms?

BASEMENT OR UTILITY ROOM

- ☐ Is your water heater set no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit (or low-medium setting) to prevent scald burns?
- ☐ Are gas furnaces and heaters vented properly and serviced annually?
- ☐ Are gas and water lines tagged for identification in case of emergency?

- ☐ Are fuses and circuit breakers labeled to show which outlets they protect?
- ☐ Do you have easily accessible light switches?
- ☐ Do you keep all harmful substances in original containers?
- ☐ Are flammable fluids stored away from furnaces, hot water heaters, or other heating units?
- ☐ Do you have extra fuses and flashlights on hand?
- ☐ Have you tested the lowest level of your home for radon?

ALL ROOMS

- ☐ Is furniture arranged to give clear paths within and between rooms?
- ☐ Are small rugs tacked down or anchored with non-slip mats, and are frayed spots in rugs mended? (Only use throw rugs if they are skid-proof or securely fastened.)
- ☐ Do electrical cords run along walls, not under rugs where they are both an obstacle and fire hazard?
- ☐ Are damaged electrical cords replaced?
- ☐ Do extension cords have sufficient capacity for the appliances to which they are attached?
- ☐ Are your outlets used for only a few appliances? (Overloaded outlets are a fire hazard.)
- ☐ Do you cover outlets if you have young children or grandchildren around?
- ☐ If guns are in your home, are they kept unloaded and locked away?
- ☐ Are small stoves and heaters placed where they cannot tip over?
- ☐ Do you have a screen in front of your fireplace?
- ☐ Is your flue and chimney cleaned by a professional annually?
- ☐ Does your home have emergency numbers near phones?
- ☐ Do you have first aid supplies?
- ☐ Do you and those you live with know how to perform the Heimlich and CPR?

OUTDOORS

- ☐ Are garden tools stored immediately after use?
- ☐ Are your sidewalks and driveways in good repair?
- ☐ Do you have a sturdy handrail by all stairs and ramps?
- ☐ Are your porches, stairs, and yard clear of clutter?
- ☐ Are children's swings, slides, and other playthings in good condition?

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) A Guide to Disposal

Common household products containing hazardous materials may be dangerous for individuals and the environment. Examples of common hazardous waste include:

- Acids/Alkalies Gasoline
- Aerosols Kerosene
- Antifreeze Mercury
- Bleach Paint
- Car Batteries Pesticides/Herbicides
- Cleaners and Polishes Solvents
- Disinfectants Used Motor Oil
- Gas Cylinders

In all cases, it is best to use up the product or share it with a neighbor before attempting to dispose of chemicals.

Here are some tips and recommendations to help keep you and the environment safe:

Acids/Alkalies

Typically the main ingredient in cleaning compounds and drain openers. These products are usually safe to use even when a few years old. Refer to label directions, and never mix cleaning products.

Aerosols

Use up all contents of aerosol containers before disposing with other trash. Substitute pump sprays whenever possible.

Antifreeze

Never pour antifreeze into a storm sewer! The sweet taste of antifreeze may attract small children and animals, so be sure to store it where they won't be tempted to drink it.

Bleach

Old bleach may still be used according to label directions for cleaning and disinfecting. Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other acid product. Toxic fumes will result.

Car Batteries

Contact a retailer that sells new car batteries; most will take the used batteries to be recycled.

Cleaners and Polishes

Seal empty containers and dispose of them with the rest of your trash.

Disinfectants

Use them up according to label instructions and store out of the reach of children.

Gas Cylinders

Butane, Propane or other pressurized gas cylinders pose an explosion hazard and can only be disposed of when the container is empty and no longer under pressure.

Gasoline

Gas older than 6 months can be safely used as fuel in your car, lawnmower or snow blower, when first regenerated by mixing it with fresh gasoline.

Kerosene

Can be safely used as fuel when first regenerated by mixing with fresh kerosene.

Mercury

Highly toxic and can be absorbed through the skin. Do not touch Mercury and do not throw Mercury in the garbage. A local high school or university laboratory may be interested in taking it. Otherwise, it can be sent to a recycler.

Paint

Once hardened, it can be put in the trash. Paint that is still usable should be donated to a neighbor.

Pesticides/Herbicides

Avoid disposal whenever possible. Never reuse the containers. Rinse them 3 times then spray the rinse water on your lawn or garden.

Solvents

You can clean used solvents by allowing the paint or dirt particles to settle out in a container. Gently pour the cleared solvent into another container to use again and discard the dried sludge in the trash.

Used Motor Oil

Motor oil should be recycled.

RECOMMENDED DISPOSAL METHODS FOR SMALL QUANTITIES OF HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Product/Chemical	Hazardous Ingredient	Best Choice	Second Choice
Acid (weak)	Acids	A	D
Anti-freeze	Ethylene Glycol	D	A
Asbestos	Asbestos Fibers	A	F
Ammonia Cleaners	Ammonia, Ethanol	G	A
Batteries: Mercury Bottom Type	Mercury, Cadmium	E	A
Batteries: Automotive	Sulfuric Acid, Lead	C	B
Bleach: Chlorine	Hydroxides, Hypochlorites	G	D
Chlorine (Pool)	Hypochlorites	G	D
Detergent Cleaners	Phosphates, Hypochlorites	G	D
Drain Cleaners	Acids, Hypochlorites, Hydroxides	G	D
Fertilizers	May contain Herbicides	G	A
Fingernail Polish Remover	Acetone	G	H
Flea-powder, Sprays, Shampoos	Pesticides	G	A

Gasoline	Benzene, Toluene, Xylene	G	A
Glues	Benzene, Toluene	G	H
Insect Pest Spray and Powders	Arsenicals, Chlorinated Hydrocarbons	A	G
Medicines	Stimulants, Inhibitors	D	A
Metal Polishes	Acids	G	A
Motor Oil	Benzene, Heavy Metals	B	A
Mothballs	Napthalenes, Paradichlorobenzenes	G	A
Oven Cleaner	Hydroxides	G	A
Paint	Lead, Methylene Chloride, Ethylene, Hydrocarbons	G	H
Paint Strippers	Toluene, Methylene Chloride, Acetone	G	A
Paint Thinners	Toluene, Petroleum Products	G	I
Spot Removers	Perchloroethylene, Acids	G	A
Syringes	Contaminated Blood or Body Fluids	K	A
Toilet bowl Cleaners	Acids, Paradichlorobenzene	G	A
Window Cleaner	Methanol	G	A
Wood Cleaners, Polishes, Waxes	Petroleum Products	G	A

- A. Call local recycling management office for specific instruction. For example: Wiesbaden Community: DSN337/5415/5500
- B. Take to local recycling center.
- C. Return to manufacturer or retailer.
- D. Wash down drain with large quantities of water.
- E. Wrap in plastic and dispose with other refuse
- F. Wet with water before removal/take to an authorized landfill in double plastic bag
- G. Use entire contents for intended purposes or give to a friend who can use them.
- H. Open lid and allow drying in a well-ventilated area before disposing with refuse.
- I. Allow solids to settle out and reuse
- J. Discharge contents in plastic bag or box and dispose of container and contents with other refuse.
- K. Place in coffee can or other puncture-resistant container, tape closed, label, and dispose of with other refuse.

SAFE ALTERNATIVES TO CHEMICALS

Air Freshener

Find the source of the odor and eliminate it. Open windows to ventilate. To scent air, use herbal bouquets, pure vanilla on a cotton ball, or simmer cinnamon and cloves.

Brass Polish

Make a paste of equal parts vinegar, salt and flour. Rub well. Rinse completely to prevent corrosion.

Drain Cleaner

Try a plunger first. Pour ½ cup baking soda down the drain, then ½ cup of vinegar. Wait a few minutes, and then follow with two quarts of boiling water. Repeat if needed. If this fails, rent or buy a drain snake.

Fertilizer

Make and use compost and organic fertilizers.

Furniture Polish

Use olive or almond oil.

Garbage Disposal Deodorizer

Use lemon or baking soda.

Mothballs for Clothes

Thoroughly clean any used clothing or furniture before introducing it into your home. Wash woolens before storing. Store in tight containers. Vacuum rugs and under furniture. Shake out woolens periodically. Use cedar chips and lavender flowers instead of mothballs.

Oven Cleaner

As a preventative measure, cover the oven bottom with a sheet of aluminum foil. Clean up spills promptly. To clean, use baking soda, soap and water with a copper scrubber and water and a lot of elbow grease.

Scouring Powder

Try baking soda.

Silver Cleaner

For larger objects, rub gently with baking soda and a damp sponge. Toothpaste also works well. Place smaller objects in a pot of boiling water with a loose, small piece of aluminum foil; add 1 tsp. Baking soda and 1 tsp. salt. Boil 2-3 minutes, then cool and dry.

Slugs and Snails

Remove tall grass and debris from gardens. Apply copper tape as a barrier. Use beer traps (replenish frequently).

Window Cleaner

Use ½ cup vinegar and 1 quart warm water. Polish with newspaper.